

Notes and gleanings

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"More than £3,000,000 is spent on the upkeep of sanatoria in this country every year," said Sir Warden Chilcott. "A great part of this money goes in experimental work in an effort to find some cure for tuberculosis in human beings. One half of this sum is borne by the rates, and the other half is paid out of the taxes.

"If so much money is being spent on tubercular work, obviously no one is going to grumble if M. Spahlinger is paid a large sum for his secret, so the offer by the Ministry cannot have been on the low side.

"I am ready to start a subscription list for M. Spahlinger with £1,000 of my own money, if money is the only thing that is delaying his work. There are many others who would follow my example if it was necessary, and the Ministry of Health would undertake to control the conditions of the experimental tests.

"Apart from the question of money, which I think I have satisfactorily answered, I can see only three other possible reasons for the delay in divulging the secret of the cure. One is the question of time. M. Spahlinger claims that it takes four years to manufacture his complete range of sera. He made his discovery thirteen years ago, so I do not think that the question of time arises.

"Then, too, there is the difficulty of manufacture, but that could easily have been overcome, considering the offers of help made.

"Lastly, there is the deplorable possibility that M. Spahlinger has been mistaken in claiming too much for his discovery."

Mr. Spahlinger's rejoinder is curt but far from satisfactory, always assuming that he is correctly reported in the *Daily Express* (Jan. 3rd):—

The Ministry of Health offered in 1922 to treat fifty test cases in London. M. Spahlinger replied that he would accept the offer when the complete sera were available, but the remedies are not yet recompleted. The Ministry has made no concrete offer of financial assistance.

M. Spahlinger expresses his thanks to Sir Warden Chilcott, M.P., for his generous offer to open a subscription list with £1,000, but declines the offer, not desiring further charity. He hopes to get money to recomplete the sera and vaccines for human beings by disposing of his successful bovine vaccine.

He states that the British Medical Association has never yet communicated with him, verbally or by letter. Even if they had he could not have sent the treatment to England before the complete sera were available.

The British Red Cross Society offered £30,000, but this sum was entirely insufficient to pay his debts, clear the mortgages on his laboratory, and also make the large quantity of sera and vaccines asked for by the Society.

M. Spahlinger is greatly distressed by polemics, which prevent him from working. He says that no one has authority to make statements in his name.

The last sentence refers to a somewhat vague statement given to the English Press by Dr. G. C. Anderson on behalf of the profession. I again quote the *Daily Express* (Jan. 1st):—

"The British Medical Association have offered to investigate the treatment, and it should be investigated, in order that the claims may be proved or disproved. It is, of course, impossible to accept the statement of any individual scientist.

"So far as we understand, Mr. Spahlinger is in need of money to prepare the vaccine and anti-serum necessary for the test. It is for M. Spahlinger to say how much money would be needed."

"It has been suggested that M. Spahlinger needs £40,000 or £50,000 to carry on his laboratory.

"Nothing like such a sum would be needed to discover if his claims were sound," said Dr. Anderson. "It would be a comparatively inconsiderable sum, and the raising of it would have the support of the profession."

On January 5th the same paper published a letter dated Jan. 1st (1) from M. Spahlinger which is also not a very convincing document, though the legal advice now to be invoked may lead to some startling developments. Here is the letter:—

Sir,—My attention has been drawn to an article appearing in your issue of December 31st under the heading "Startling report on the Spahlinger 'cure,'" which quotes passages from an article by Dr. Thomas Nelson on the treatment of some of my patients in 1914. I shall be glad if you will allow me to say at once that Dr. Nelson's statements are most inaccurate, and that I am taking legal advice in the matter forthwith.

Perhaps I may add that I have in my possession all the photographs of the original written hospital records of all patients treated with my remedies at the St. George's Hospital, together with letters written to me—since 1920

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by some of these very patients, who were completely cured."

That there is not the slightest doubt of the treatment meeting with success is proved by the eulogistic acknowledgement sent by Mr. J. Havlock Wilson to the *Daily Express* (Jan. 1st):—

Sir,—My youngest son had a breakdown in health about June, 1925. On many occasions during the previous two years he had shown signs of lung trouble. When the breakdown occurred I immediately had him medically examined by at least three doctors, and they expressed the opinion that there was danger of tuberculosis developing.

Having heard of the Spahlinger treatment I caused careful enquiries to be made in Geneva and elsewhere, and the reports were such that I made up my mind that my son should have the Spahlinger treatment. With this object in view, I sent him to Geneva in October, 1925. He was examined by Dr. Stefani and Mr. Spahlinger, the former pronouncing the case to be one of tuberculosis well advanced. Spahlinger said the case would require not less than eighteen months' treatment.

At the end of three months' treatment there were visible signs of improvement. My son rapidly gained weight, and at the end of nine months' treatment he was examined by several medical men, one of whom said he was fit to pass A1 class.

I wanted to assure myself that the Spahlinger treatment was quite genuine, so three months ago my son was again examined by two medical men. The medical men in question could not be described as Spahlinger men, so they exercised the greatest possible care. In their report they declared that while he was well on the road to recovery there were still signs of slight lung trouble.

A further examination took place six weeks later, the report being that my son showed signs of further recovery since the previous test, and the opinion was expressed that there was no reason why he should not fully recover from the lung trouble.

I think it is important that this case should be made public. There can be no doubt as to the facts I have stated above."

To wind up this article I reprint the report of an explosion which occurred in the laboratory on December 29th as communicated to the English Press by Reuters:—

On Wednesday night, about ten o'clock, while Dr. Spahlinger was working in his private laboratory at the Spahlinger Institute here, a large glass flask containing huge quantities of virulent cultures of tuberculosis exploded.

The explosion was so violent that the deadly germs were scattered over the whole room. Allowing none of his assistants to enter the room for fear that they might contract the disease, Dr. Spahlinger remained in the room for several hours, hanging his clothes and disinfecting himself and thoroughly cleansing the laboratory.

A similar accident occurred last year, and affected the scientist's health for several months. In order to avoid explosions, special containers have been made; but, in spite of all precautions, one of these exploded with a loud report, deluging the room with a mass of deadly germs sufficient to wipe out entire countries.

Dr. Spahlinger resumed his work next morning as if nothing had happened. He is grieved at the loss of such large quantities of tubercle bacilli, which had taken considerable time and trouble to grow.

It is to be hoped that his strong immunity against tuberculosis will protect him once more against the fatal germs, which he inhaled after the accident, while taking the necessary steps to kill the bacilli and prevent them from harming others.

The work at the Institute is proceeding as usual.

The Value of Snow in £ s. d.

It is left to the *Sunderland Echo* (Dec. 30th) to "capitalise" the annual snowfall in Switzerland, but the magnitude of the task has evidently frightened our contemporary from finishing his calculation, for we only learn that the winter's snowfall in Switzerland is worth "a million

pounds per inch" and he has omitted to measure out the number of inches and follow this process by the very interesting multiplication:—

The real founders of all the famous winter resorts in Switzerland were Englishmen errant, who could not be sure of a regular supply of snow and ice in their own country and so took their winter holidays in a land where tobogganing could be made the most thrilling of pastimes—with that element of personal peril which is the spice of sport.

Thanks to these pioneers, the winter's snowfall is worth, say, a million pounds an inch to Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries. This economic truth should be borne in mind by the intelligent foreigner when he is moved to declare that the principal achievement of the English is to have taught the world innumerable ways of wasting time. It is something to have shown how much wealth and health is contained in a pinch of snow!

But it is a pity that we cannot establish some of these winter sports in our own island. There are districts in the Highlands where rain falls only in the form of snow for three or four months, and the facilities for tobogganing and ski-running are excellent. Why not make a start in 1927.

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